NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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JOHN BUE/PARIS

THE MOSCOW TRIALS: FRENCH VIEWS

ANNCR:

REACTION IN FRANCE TO THE MOSCOW TRIALS AND THEIR FALL-OUT HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY SHARP IN FRANCE, ESPECIALLY ON THE PART OF PUBLIC OPINION AT LARGE. V.O.A.'S JOHN BUE HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

THE REACTION HAS COME MAINLY FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES, FROM THE LEFT, LABOR UNIONS, INTELLECTUALS, MATHEMATICIANS, SCIENTISTS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND JEWISH GROUPS, AND PRESS COMMENTATORS. THE LEFT-ORIENTED FRENCH WEEKLY "LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR" WRITES ANGRILY ABOUT WHAT IT CALLS "AN AGING AND SCLEROTIC SOVIET SYSTEM." IT PREDICTS THAT BY THE END OF THE CENTURY, DISSENT IN THE SOVIET UNION WILL BE WIDESPREAD, IN LARGE AREAS POPULATED BY NON-RUSSIAN ETHNIC GROUPS. NEWSPAPERS INCLUDING COMMUNIST DAILY "L'HUMANITE" AND MORE RADICAL DAILIES TO ITS LEFT, HAVE ALL CRITICIZED THE SENTENCES. SOME SEE THESE AS A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE UNITED STATES; OTHERS, AS AN OVERPLAY RESOLVED TO STAMP OUT EVEN THE MILDEST FORM OF DISSENT.

SEVERAL COMMENTATORS SPEAK OF A HOUSE-CLEANING OPERATION IN ANTICIAPATION OF THE MOSCOW OLYMPIC GAMES TWO YEARS HENCE. THE IDEA OF PROPOSING A FRENCH BOYCOTT, TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES. A GROUP OF FRENCH SCIENTISTS AND MATHEMATICIANS HAVE OPENLY ADVOCATED BOYCOTTING SOVIET SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS. COMMUNISTS, SOCIALISTS, RIGHT-WING JEWISH PARTIES AND PRO-PALESTINIAN LEFTIST GROUPS JOINED TOGETHER IN A PARISH STREET DEMONSTRATION DURING THE GINZBURG-SHCHARANSKY TRIALS. SIMILAR DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD IN TWO MAJOR PROVINCIAL CITIES.

PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAVE A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE PRESIDENT PREFERS MUTED DIPLOMACY TO DIRECT APPEALS IN INDIVIDUAL CASES. HE REFUSED TO SEE ANDREI AMALRIK LAST YEAR, AND MRS. SHCHARANSKY RECENTLY, AND EVEN CHIDED PRESIDENT CARTER IN A PRESS INTERVIEW ABOUT MR. CARTER'S PUBLIC BACKING OF ANDREI SAKHAROV AND OTHER DISSIDENTS.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S REACTION TO THE TRIALS AMOUNTED TO A CAUTIOUSLY WORDED FOREIGN OFFICE STATEMENT EXPRESSING DEEP ANXIETY MOTIVATED BY THE FACT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE THE BASIS OF DETENTE. THE STATEMENT RECALLED THAT LAST YEAR, THE FRENCH PRESIDENT SUCCEEDED IN GETTING A REFERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUDED A JOINT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES PUBLISHED AT THE END OF SOVIET PRESIDENT LEONID BREZHNEV'S PARIS VISIT. BUT, IN THE FACE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION, FRENCH PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO NOTE THAT NEITHER THE PROTEST MARCHERS NOR THE PRESIDENT'S DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE HAVE HAD ANY APPARENT MODERATING INFLUENCE UPON MOSCOW'S TREATMENT OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS.

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